

# The Washington Guitar Society Newsletter

Number 73 Autumn 2005

WGS

**Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948)**

by John Patykula

*(Editor's note: The author of this series of articles is an Assistant Chair and Coordinator of the Guitar Program in the Department of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University with the rank of Associate Professor.)*

My interest in the music of Manuel Maria Ponce began in 1968 when I was still in high school. I was preparing to audition to get into the North Carolina School of the Arts where Jesús Silva, a protege of Andres Segovia, taught. I was working on a Carcassi etude, two or three Sor studies, and a few short pieces by Tarrega. My teacher at that time suggested I learn some of the Ponce Preludes. I found this music very different, yet strangely beautiful. I knew nothing of Ponce except what I could find in the jacket notes on the back of the Segovia LP's.

By some good fortune, I passed my audition was accepted into the program at the N.C. School of the Arts for the 1969 academic year. I became a student of Jesús Silva—and remained a student of his until his death in 1996. Silva had been a student at the National Conservatory in the 1930's, where he studied harmony and aesthetics with Ponce. Ponce was one of the jurors for his graduating recital. During this time, Silva became almost a son to Ponce, who had no children. Silva was often invited to the Maestro's home, especially when Andres Segovia

was visiting on one of his numerous world-tours. In his Reminiscences of Manuel M. Ponce, written for Guitar Review at the death of the composer, Silva writes: "....my memory is filled with the recollections of the wonderful moments which Destiny allowed me to pass with so beloved a teacher. Ponce-Maestro—always a open fountain in whatever related to his knowledge—ready always to offer a fruitful drink not only from the source of his art, but from every aspect of his life—which I considered an unmerited treasure of his friendship, and because of which my soul could often delight in listening to the interesting and beautiful stories of his life—and because so many took place in the company of his beloved friend "Andres"—Andres Segovia, who was, as Ponce's wife and tender companion said, "The friend of his soul."

"It is easy to imagine the great significance these conversations had and will have for me—what I learned from the closeness and intimacy of their presence—of their outstanding lives—two teachers—the lightest detail of their art and life being for me a magnificent lesson."

Often, Segovia would spend two to three weeks in Mexico City, giving up to six concerts during that period. Because of this special relationship between

*continued on page 2...*

**From the Desk of the Editor**  
by Bob Wysong

I am pleased to announce that Keith Fillipu, who wrote the article in the last WGS newsletter about hand anatomy, will be the featured performer at the November 18, 2005 WGS meeting at the Chevy Chase Community Center. There will also be a WGS Open Stage on October 21 for those wanting to share their talents with other members. We all had a great time at the last meeting in August when a new member, Charles Mokotoff, played Barrios, and variations on the Japanese melody Sakurai. Bill Dykes and friends played Bach minuets, jazz improvisations, and yours truly rounded out the session with selections from Bach Cello Suite #1.



**From Bach to Rock**

by John Patykula

Bob Anderson, once known for his Bach and Scarlatti interpretations while he was a guitar major at VCU during the late 1990's, is now pursuing a different path. He is currently in California playing in Tommy Lee's band. Bob recently appeared on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno and on Comedy Central's roast of Pamela Anderson. He is still playing his classical guitar, which he says "is still very satisfying."



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Silva and Ponce (and also Segovia), I was able to learn and understand more about Ponce and his music.

Manuel Maria Ponce was born in Fresnillo, in the state of Zacatecas, on December 8, 1882, and raised in the town of Aguascalientes. He received his earliest musical training from his sister and sang in the children's choir at the Templo de San Diego. At the age of five, while he was recovering from the measles, he wrote his first piece titled *The Dance of the Measles*. At age twelve, he was appointed organist at the Cathedral of Aguascalientes and, two years later, composed a famous *Gavotte*, which was used in programs all over the world by the acclaimed dancer La Argentina.

In 1901, Ponce entered the Conservatorio Nacional in Mexico City and, three years later, went to Europe to study composition with Enrico Bossi and Dall'Olio in Bologna. In 1906 he traveled to Berlin to study piano with Martin Krause, who was a disciple of Liszt. About Martin Krause, the great Chilean pianist Claudio Arrau stated: "All his students were afraid of him." Arrau relates that Krause's students had to play the preludes and fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* in different keys. "In front of all the pupils in the conservatory, he would test whether one could play in another

key—usually one very far away, not just one tone or one half tone. He also insisted on having us memorize single voices. Bach in general was one of the basis of his teaching."

Returning to Mexico in 1908, Ponce was appointed Professor at the Conservatorio Nacional and began to compose numerous songs and piano works in a distinctive Mexican style. On July 7, 1912, in the Teatro Arbeau in Mexico City, he presented a concert of his works, including his Piano Concerto and the Trio for piano, violin and cello. These works, according to the distinguished composer Carlos Chavez, were "the foundation stones of higher Mexican musical expression" and the concert was considered the beginnings of the nationalistic movement in music in Mexico. Until this concert, the efforts toward higher forms of Mexican musical expression could only be described as "salon music".

In 1914, several of Ponce's songs were published, including *Estrellita*, which was to become one of the world's most-loved melodies. Jascha Heifetz helped make *Estrellita* widely known with his arrangement for violin and piano. Many years later, Ponce dedicated a guitar transcription of this beautiful song to his student, Jesús Silva. (According to Segovia, Ponce actually composed *Estrellita* around 1900, when he was eleven or

twelve years old. Because of a copyright technicality, Ponce never received any royalties for this song.)

In order to escape the political turmoil of the Mexican revolution (which included threats not only to Ponce, but that of his students), Ponce resided in Havana from 1915 to 1917. Here he incorporated the sultry rhythms of the tropics in several of his compositions. He also became known to the Cuban people as a composer and pianist of distinction.

Ponce returned to Mexico City to teach and compose. In 1923, Ponce, who was also a music critic, wrote a review of the first concert given by Andres Segovia in Mexico City. The two great artists later met and a strong friendship developed—a friendship which would last until

... to be continued in next issue

### Our Beloved Guitar?

by Don Sauter

From "Who's Afraid Of Classical Music?", 1989, by Michael Walsh, music critic for Time Magazine, page 151: "I have spent the better part of my critical career avoiding classical guitar in all of its manifestations." Walsh does go on, however, to say some kind things about Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez".



## Guitar Alumni Composes for TV & Films

by John Patykula

Guitarist David Russell has been busy composing music for several television shows and movies. He spent a month in Moscow, Russia at the end of 2002 where he scored a TV series for ORT Russian Network Television. The show, "Russians In The City Of Angels," is about a former Moscow policeman who lives in Los Angeles helping the LAPD with crimes in the Russian community. Some of the guest stars were Sean Young, Gary Busey and Eric Roberts. Two of the shows were re-edited and re-

leased as the film "Border Blues." After that David was a ghost writer on two TV films. He wrote several cues for Oscar winning composer Ken Thorne for the film "Santa, Jr.", and wrote some of the music on a film called "Detonator." David also scored a show for TV Land at the beginning of 2004 called "Living In TV Land with Dick Van Patten."

Last fall he worked closely with composer Christopher Young as a synthesizer programmer for on

the film "The Grudge." Recently he did another reality show for TV Land called "Chasing Farrah". It was a seven-episode series focusing on the life of Farrah Fawcett. David recently completed the score to the film "No Retreat From Destiny," a film about the battle that saved Washington, DC during the Civil War. This film premiered at Richmond's Byrd Theatre on September 9th. In 2002, David was accepted as a member of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM WGS:**

*The Washington Guitar Society (WGS) meets on the third Friday of every month at the Chevy Chase Community Center (5601 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC). Specific dates and performers are listed in the "Take Note" section of this newsletter. Meetings with a featured performer begin with an open stage from 7:30 - 8:00 p.m. and continue with the featured performer at 8:00 p.m.*

*Open Stage: The WGS hosts an open stage at the start of those meetings that spotlight a featured performer. It is not a competition, just plain fun. The open stage starts at 7:30 p.m. and are followed by the featured performer. WGS "Members Recitals", "Youth Concerts", and "Ensemble Sessions" do not feature an open stage.*

*More Information: You will find additional information, as well as links to other guitar sites at our website: [www.dcguitar.org](http://www.dcguitar.org). Since the newsletter is published quarterly, please visit our forum: <http://forum.dcguitar.org/> for more up-to-date information.*

*Newsletter: We welcome input from all members. Please send ideas or articles for this newsletter to Trish Wysong. Deadline for publication in the next issue is December 1, 2005.*

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## 2004 First World Guitar Conference: A Week in Guitar Heaven

by Cathy/Cate Fleming

The setting on the Towson State University campus in Maryland was as idyllic as the music performed. It seems so long ago that the cicadas invaded that space and time with their symphony (or cacophony depending on the perspective of the listener). The \$385 registration fee included tickets to at least three concerts/recitals per day/evening for the entire week. Guitarists from all over the world, including Japan, Mexico, and Russia made the pilgrimage. The myriad of scheduled performers guaranteed something for everyone. Noted classical guitarists included Benjamin Verdery, the LAGQ, the Assad Brothers, Sharon Isbin and David Russell, who performed, conducted master classes and participated in seminars. The embarrassment of riches became apparent whenever it was time to choose the next session to attend. Alas cloning has yet to be perfected!

Les Paul, who regaled us with stories of early electric guitar prototypes, received an honorary PhD. and treated us to a performance and lecture. Ritchie Havens, who works a lot with young people these days, also performed in as spirited a fashion as ever. The varying styles booked for the First World Guitar Conference (FWGC) provided stimulation and much food for thought: jazz (Jim Hall, who premiered a commissioned

guitar concerto with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Martin Taylor, gentleman of guitar jazz sounds) flamenco's (Paco Pena), rock princess (Jennifer Batten), "spacegrass" as in Tony Rice and company's mystical set... it was and remains impossible to pick a favorite. Conference organizers led by Dr. Helene Braezeale and sponsors deserve Hall of Fame nominations for their hard work and dedication in putting together the FWGC – an experience of a lifetime for performers and conference attendees alike.

There was an open play venue in the student center. The club atmosphere allowed the truly gutsy to try out new sets. Many players from around the globe had more than it would take to launch a musical career. Others found out in a gentle way that it might be premature to quit the day job. The pros graced us with their presence by using it as their spot to chill. We were treated to some delightful impromptu ensemble sets. New York met Nashville and Las Vegas. The US met the UK and Russia. The mixtures were limitless and magical. Music history in the making was glorious to see and hear. I like to think that creative juices started to flow in many new directions with more joys yet to be experienced on future CDs and at live performances.

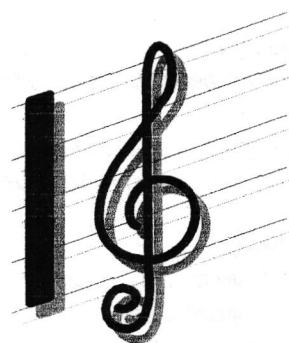
## Intrigue in Towson

by Don Sauter

This is from an article about Manuel Barrueco in the Baltimore Sun (May 1 2004, page 1D), called "First String; Manuel Barrueco's talents on the guitar and in the classroom draw eager students to the Peabody Institute":

As he has for the past eight years, Barrueco will hold a weeklong master class at Peabody early next month for students from around the country and beyond. But he won't be taking part in the World Guitar Congress at Towson University going on at the same time. "Originally I was supposed to be involved," he says, "but we couldn't see eye to eye on things."

Anybody heard any good rumors?







# Just for the fun of it....


Part of the Legnani collection of 36 short waltzes. Royal Copenhagen guitar edition. Our thanks to Don Sauter for sending this along.


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## TAKE NOTE:

*Upcoming calendar of events*

### October 21, WGS monthly meeting -- Open Stage

Chevy Chase Community Center, 5601 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC. 7:30 p.m. See you there!



**October 22, 2005: 4:00 - 10:00 p.m. Livestock: The Benefit for Jimmy Nalls.** At the Marshall Livestock Exchange, John Marshall Highway, Rt 55, just a mile east of Marshall VA at the corner of Aden Rd and John Marshall Hwy. Jimmy Nalls is a session guitarist in Nashville Tennessee but hails from the DC area where he played in the rock group DC Dog back in the 70's and went on to a career playing with the Allman Brothers, Sea Level with Chuck Leavel, Paul Stuckey of Peter Paul and Mary. To see a more complete list of his many credits go to [www.jimmynalls.com](http://www.jimmynalls.com). Jimmy has Parkinson's Syndrome, a debilitating nerve disease and the Virginia nonprofit Coalition Against Hunger is rallying area musicians to put on a show to raise money to help Jimmy in this difficult time. For more information call Bill Dykes at 703-536-6929 or Wayne Rodgers at 703-615-6330, or call the Coalition Against Hunger - 703-754-1355. This event is the inaugural for many events to come. The list of performers is growing, and any style of music is welcome, so come on out and arrange to play or just take in the good music. Come and enjoy our "dairy - air"!

### November 18, WGS meeting - Performance by Keith Fillippu

Keith Fillippu has been playing classical guitar since age 15 when he picked up his first guitar. He recently transferred to James Madison University, where he is a junior and a performance major. He has spent the last two years studying under Dr. Kevin Vigil. He recently won first place in the annual music competition at NVCC, and has been awarded a scholarship from Fairfax County's Spotlight on the Arts Program. He also teaches at several Music and Arts stores in the area.

### December 16, WGS monthly meeting

#### Looking ahead to 2006:

### January 20: WGS monthly meeting.

### February 17: WGS monthly meeting

### March 17: WGS monthly meeting

**March 26, 2006:** Flamenco guitarist Torcuato Zamora, 4pm, Vlahcevic Concert Hall, General Admission: \$10 (VCU: 804-828-1166)

**April 2, 2006:** Guitars! Guitars! Guitars! - The annual VCU faculty/alumni concert, 4pm, FREE (VCU: 804-828-1166)

#### The John E. Marlow Guitar Series

Saturday performances begin at 8 p.m. in the Westmoreland Congregational Church at 1 Westmoreland Circle Mass. & Western Aves.

\* **October 22, 2005** -- CARLOS BARBOSA-LIMA & BERTA ROJAS

\* **November 19, 2005** -- RAFAEL PADRON

\* **January 28, 2006** -- GUY VAN DUSER

\* **February 25, 2006** -- DALE KAVANAGH

\* **March 25, 2006** -- MARCOS DIAZ

\* **April 22, 2006** -- PEPE ROMERO

For more information, or to order tickets for upcoming performances, visit [www.marlowguitar.org](http://www.marlowguitar.org).

International Conservatory of Music

The John E. Marlow Guitar Series

7001 Delaware Street  
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## WASHINGTON GUITAR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*Please complete the following:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know a little bit about you:

*Are you a (check all that apply):*

- ☐ Music Performer  
☐ Music Teacher  
☐ Music Hobbyist  
☐ Luthier  
☐ Guitar music lover  
☐ Student  
☐ Interested in ensemble playing  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Can we:*

Include this information in our membership directory?

Yes: \_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_

May we call upon you to volunteer on occasion?

Yes: \_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_

Annual Memberships Dues are as follows:

Regular membership -	\$15.00
Family Membership -	\$20.00
Non-Local Membership -	\$10.00
Additional contribution to the John E. Marlow Guitar Recital Series (optional)	_____

*Total amount included with this application:* \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks/money order payable to the Washington Guitar Society and send to:

Ms. Beverly Ross, Treasurer  
 The Washington Guitar Society  
 4607 Guilford Place  
 College Park MD 20740

## Thank You for Your Support!

## Revisit the Cows With Me

by Don Sauter

WGS Newsletter 65 (9/03) included a round of Guitar Jeopardy. One of the questions was: Who wrote the earliest known **guitar** music?

- Hint: published in 1546
- Hint: included in a volume of music for the vihuela
- Hint: one of the pieces for guitar was "Guardame las vacas" (Watch the cows).
- Hint: first name, Alonso.

ANSWER:

Alonso Mudarra

It should have ended there, but an article in WGS Newsletter 69 (Sep 2004) disagreed with the answer asserting "Luis de Narvaez wrote 'Guardame las Vacas' in 1546, not Alonso Mudarra."

It's probably safe to say that that "Guardame las Vacas" was a "folk song" that was arranged by various composers. Luis Narvaez wrote a well-known set of variations for **vihuela** for his "Los seys libros del Delphin" publication of 1538. This work is of profound importance in the history of music for being the first set of full-blown variations,

each with an individual character, and closing with a coda.

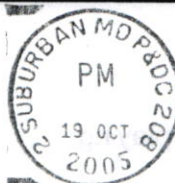
Alonso Mudarra (which actually was the correct answer) wrote two settings of "Guardame las Vacas" in his "Tres Libros" of 1546. This publication has over 200 pages of music for the vihuela and seven pages of music for the four-course **guitar**, which is remarkable for being the earliest known guitar music. Mudarra wrote one setting of "Guardame las Vacas" for vihuela and one for guitar. The guitar version was published in WGS Newsletter 20 (Apr 1995).

## The Washington Guitar Society Newsletter

c/o Bob Wysong, Editor

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**NEXT WGS MEETING:**  
**OCTOBER 21, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.**

Chevy Chase Community Center, 5601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington DC

**See you there!**

